

Editorial

Ethical Acumen: The Dexterity to Balance Clinical Care, Research and Publication

Greetings from India!

This editorial is specially written to address readers of this journal. The readers entitled as academicians, researchers, students, residents and the ones who regularly update themselves with current concepts of dentistry. I believe a majority of my addressed populace would find this as a helpful tool when they would think of different facets in which dentistry as a whole is indulged.

‘By Seeking and Blundering We learn’

—*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

Dentistry not being an exact science akin to chemistry and physics has undergone immense changes in its concepts over decades. Its transition from the era believing in ‘Dentistry based on Evidence’ to the modern world with a firm belief in ‘Evidence-based Dentistry’ has been a phenomenal journey. This metamorphosis on its individual stage has put forth ideologies of which some have been proven a myth and some are accepted as a fact. Since, today is the era of ‘Evidence-based Dentistry’, the fraternity during its journey has laid down many general principles which may be applicable to some and not applicable to few, which in turn increases the need for more research to unfold hidden facts.

Dental research is two folded, where one of its guises cast out the ongoing research—commonly termed by many as ‘inherently experimental process’ and the other is ‘innovations’ with concern for dental materials, devices and techniques.

Research in dental practice has become a one-way communication, where most practitioners believe in the methods taught to them in dental school having least interest to keep up with current concepts. However, in order to display the potential as a competent dental practitioner, one needs to understand research and interpret the current concept which enables oneself to apply to their patients. But research does not end on application rather it ends, when majority of the fraternity comprehends the same and utilizes it for further check, analysis and development, which is only possible following publication.

Although such exercise is beneficial for dentists, there are certain problems to recognize and avoid. These are the problems between the conflicting role of dentist and researcher. Such potential problems can be overcome by the ethical values of the dentist viz compassion, competence and autonomy which also apply to the dental researcher. As long as dentists understand and follow the basic rule to research ethics, they can successfully integrate research into their clinical practice and publish the same for know-how of the community.

The basic principles of research ethics have been established since long. The benchmarks among these follow ‘Declaration of Helsinki’ and International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research involving Human Subjects. Thus, the basic understanding of these codes becomes essential for balancing clinical care and research which forms a basis for projection of an ethical published report.

‘Physical science will not console me for the ignorance of morality in the time of affliction. But the science of ethics will always console me for the ignorance of physical sciences.’

—*Blaise Pascal*

Editor-in-Chief

Shankargouda Patil

Assistant Professor

Department of Oral Pathology

MS Ramaiah Dental College and Hospital

Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

e-mail: editor@thejcdp.com